UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core) **May/June 2013**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with all questions on the Question Paper.

You may annotate this Insert and use the blank spaces for planning. This Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

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Read the following passage carefully and then answer all the questions on the Question Paper.

In this passage the writer, Kevin Pilley, describes his experience of visiting an underwater hotel off the coast of Florida.

Barracuda Breakfast

In the Emerald Lagoon in Key Largo, 86 kilometres south of Miami, is the world's first and only underwater hotel.

Everything in Florida involves large volumes of water. The southern-most state of the USA is the self-proclaimed water sports capital of the world and now, after all that snorkelling, water skiing, swimming with dolphins, hand-feeding moray eels, plus all those jetties, jacuzzis and glass-bottomed boat rides, you can even sleep the night surrounded by water if you want to.

Opened in 1986, the Jules Verne Lodge, sunk 9 metres down in the Undersea Park close to the Key Largo Marine Sanctuary, can accommodate up to six in bunk-style accommodation in two bedrooms. Inside your 3 metres by 15 metres undersea sub-Atlantic habitat, formerly a marine research laboratory, you feel odd. It is as if you have veered off the road in your large hi-tech caravan and plunged into the sea only to land, right way up, on the sandy bottom. The Jules Verne underwater-suite is more of a submerged caravan than a hotel. But it is exclusive. Nobody bothers you for matches or sugar and the only spies are fish such as barracudas.

Each large, circular window offers a sea view. The American owners are keen to offer you 'limitless opportunities' and 'the ultimate' – waking in the morning and drawing the curtain to see a metre-long barracuda staring at you is surely some kind of ultimate. Few Europeans get the chance to observe marine life so closely. Likewise the colourful marine life make the most of the limitless opportunities of observing at close-range, tourists in their colourful designer pyjamas.

When you check-in you need not show your passport, only a diving certificate. If you haven't dived before you can attend a three-hour 'aquatic habitat orientation programme' which involves learning what salt water tastes like and how to put flippers on the right way. The secret of putting flippers on is that there is no secret. There is no right or wrong way to put on flippers. There is no such thing as a left or right flipper. If you remember flippers go on your feet, you can't go far wrong.

The programme is taken by the world's only full-time professional mermaid, Carla Rush, a 40-year-old from Illinois and former captain of a local dive charter boat. She has been a 'pro' mermaid for nearly two years and will teach you how to operate your flippers, the rudiments of breathing compressed air, help you in and out of your wetsuit, clean your mask for you, bring your meals, wash up, carry your bags and do anything else that needs doing, including pushing you in.

After a short downward swim you emerge up from under the hotel into a dive port from where, once Carla has eased you out of your oxygen tank, you are shown to your living chambers. These are equipped with all mod cons. Carla then leaves you to your microwave steak and lobster and returns to dry land to work the controls and answer every request of the guests. Room service is excellent and if you leave your shoes outside they are clean in the morning.

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There isn't much to do under water but you can watch videos with John Wayne and, predictably, *Splash* and *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea.* You can hope that somebody rings you up. Wrong numbers are fun. You can ring anybody in the world or you can merely wonder how much air you have in your 55 square metres of living space. The brochure boasts 'limitless' air supply as part of your package.

If lucky you might get a sighting of a manatee swimming past your dining room window. A manatee is a curious looking and very rare marine creature which can only be described as having a bald man's head and the body of a stout middle-aged woman, weighing 136 kilograms.

When you check out you decompress. This ensures that you aren't suffering from 'the bends', a sickness caused by decompression, and receive your treasured Aquanaut certificate which verifies that you have spent the whole night in the sea and enjoyed all the benefits of the experience. These are obvious. Staying underwater in Florida is the best way to avoid sunburn, mosquitoes and annoying tourist activities!

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